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Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer.

Loving Father, You have told us that Your perfect love casts out fear. So we open our minds to think about how much You love us and open our hearts to be filled with Your unlimited love. Remind us that nothing happens without Your permission and that You are able to use everything that happens to us to bring us closer to You. Therefore, we commit to You the anxieties in our personal and professional lives that cause fear of the future. So that we may work today with freedom from fear, we entrust to Your care our loved ones and their needs, our friends who face sickness and problems, our fellow workers in the Senate who need Your special care. We surrender our fears of the possible failure of our own plans and programs. Thank You for Your bracing assurance through Isaiah: "Fear not . . . you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you."

Now we press on to the work of the day with the assurance that Your perfect love will cast out fear all through the day. In the name of Him who never leaves nor forsakes us. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable WAYNE ALLARD, a Senator from the State of Colorado, led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11:30 a.m. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1287, the nuclear waste disposal bill. Members should be aware that amendments to the nuclear waste bill will be offered during today's session. Further, a final agreement regarding amendments and debate time should be entered into at some time today. Therefore, Senators can expect amendments to the nuclear waste bill throughout the day. As a reminder, second-degree amendments to the committee substitute must be filed by noon today.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I appreciate the outline of today's activities by the acting leader. I would say, however, I think we had better understand that there is a unanimous consent agreement floating around now that is not even close, and so unless there is more work done in this regard, I think there will be a number of people on this side who simply will object to the proposal. But I am always open to suggestions, and I say to the acting leader that if the manager of the bill, Senator MURKOWSKI, has some ideas in this regard, we are certainly a phone call away.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLARD). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 11:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

Under the previous order, the time until 11 a.m. shall be under the control of the Senator from Illinois or his designee.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Chair. I rise to speak in morning business.

CHICAGO'S BOB COLLINS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, before addressing the President's budget, I wish to address an issue that is more personal and a lot closer to home. Chicago lost a great friend yesterday, and I lost a great friend as well. Bob Collins, top-rated radio personality in the city of Chicago, died in an airplane crash that was reported around the Nation.

Bob Collins was an extraordinary person. When you think of what creates a community, it is a person such as Bob Collins. His voice every morning in Chicago was a blend of wisdom and humor that really set people off on a good day. I can recall visiting his studios so many times and feeling right at home.

Bob was a typical Chicagoan, a typical Midwesterner, and I think that is the reason for his success. Our thoughts, of course, today are with his family and his wife Christine, but we should reflect for a moment on the great contribution which this man made in over 25 years at radio station WGN.

Great cities are made up of great people and Chicago is no exception. Bob Collins, at WGN Radio since 1974, was a combination of town crier, court jester, wise counselor, and fellow common man. A Shakespeare quote comes to mind: "He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose."

He started at age 13 at a radio station in Lakeland, FL. When he was 14, he had his own show, and radio was still at that time everyone's link to the world. Until the day he died, he remained Chicago residents' link to each other and to a wider community.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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What was it about Bob Collins that made hundreds of thousands of Chicagoans tune in virtually every weekday morning? What was it about Bob Collins that enabled him not only to follow his fabled predecessor Wally Phillips, but to create his own following?

Well, like Bob, it is fairly simple. In an age of political extremes and shock radio, we found in Bob Collins an observant, thoughtful, plain spoken but fair and common man who never lost touch with the community he loved. He connected with us and with the families across Illinois and Chicago who were his loyal fans. Shaving in the morning, drinking coffee, fighting the daily commute, Bob was there at our side.

In addition to winning our ears and hearts, Bob's unparalleled ability to mix humor, human interest stories, and intelligent, thoughtful news won him award after award. His commitment to Chicago did not end when the microphone was turned off. He was always the champion of the little guy. He received the Salvation Army award known as "The Other Award" because of his spirit and his dedication.

His hobbies included motorcycling and flying. He was a man who enjoyed life and every minute of it. WGN's Spike O'Dell signed on this morning and announced: WGN Radio, Chicago. This is the Bob Collins Show." These words remind us that mornings in Chicago will always belong to Bob Collins, and he will continue to ride and fly and laugh through all of our memories.

Thank you, Uncle Bobby. Chicago is going to miss you.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the topic this morning for our morning business is the President's budget, a budget released by the President several days ago that is a continuation of a strategy of the past 7 years, a strategy which has paid off for America. There are those who have rejected this budget. There are those who have said it is a disaster. There are those who have used the timeworn cliché that the President's budget is dead on arrival. For those who want to use this medical analogy, let me remind them of another medical admonition: First, do no harm. Those who would criticize the President's budget should come up with their alternative. Let them see if they can match the performance of the Clinton administration over the last 7 years. Let them come up with a formula that is sensible, that will move this country forward as quickly and as positively as President Clinton's plans have during the course of his administration.

His budget says we have a strategy based on fiscal discipline, a strategy which will bring down the national debt and say to our children: We will not saddle you or burden you with debt that we incurred during our lifetime for our purpose.

That is the linchpin and pillar of the President's budget, and it is sound. It is sound for our future.

The President says that as we bring down this national debt, we will preserve Social Security so it is there not only for the current retirees, but the baby boomers and beyond. We will invest in Medicare, an issue which many Republicans do not even want to discuss. We will make certain that the health insurance plan for the elderly and disabled in America is adequately funded and the doctors, hospitals, and health care providers across America know that Medicare has a bright future.

The Nation is witnessing the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 43 years, the smallest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest overall crime rate in 25 years, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years. The statistics go on and on.

Whether it is a Presidential candidate or a Member of Congress who is critical of President Clinton's budget and approach, my challenge to them is: How would you do it better? What can we look to in history to point to a better model than what we have seen over the past 7 years? We reached a milestone in America's economic history. Our economic expansion is the longest, a remarkable 107 months of consecutive growth. In fact, it was reported yesterday that we have had productivity growth of 5 percent. America is on a roll, and those who would derail it for their own political purposes had best step back and think twice.

There are clearly differences which I will have with the President on specifics in the budget. There are differences which will come out during the course of the congressional debate, but whether they come from the Democratic side or Republican side, let us not lose sight of our goal.

Alan Greenspan, as Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, last year spoke to several committees in Congress—and he continues to do that—and admonished us to keep in mind the basic things we need to do as a nation to continue to progress. Bringing down the national debt is his highest priority.

President Clinton's budget invests money in those things that will keep this economy moving forward—in the people of America. He has not given up on the families and people who have made this economic recovery such a reality.

He is investing in education so the next generation of skilled workers and leaders will be there. He is investing in health care to take away one of the major concerns of every family in America: affordability of quality health care.

Yes, the President does have a tax cut plan, but it is a targeted, specific tax cut plan—not the broad-based, overwhelming plan which we hear from Presidential candidate George W. Bush or some leaders in Congress, but one

that is more sensible, more targeted, more consistent with maintaining our economic growth.

The President says families worry about paying for college education; let's help them; let's give them a deduction for college education expenses. In doing that, we will start to enable more and more young people to realize their dream of a college education and pass it along to their children. Is there anything more important for the future of our country?

The President says as well there should be a tax credit for long-term care for the fastest growing segment of the American population—people over the age of 85, our parents and our grandparents, many of whom will need help in their advancing years. Their sons and daughters care about them, and we need to help them with the long-term care tax credit.

The earned-income tax credit is a term with which many people are not familiar, but it is a tax credit for working families who are not making much money. We want to encourage work and help families, and the President, focusing on the earned-income tax credit, leads us in the right direction.

Of course, there are those who say if we are going to have a surplus over the next 10 years, then the first thing we should do is give a massive tax cut primarily to wealthy people. Yet we know quite honestly that is irresponsible. The American people know that intuitively. First, the surplus is not in hand and, second, to take whatever surplus we have and give it away as a permanent tax cut is to say to people across America that we do not need to pay down our national debt, we do not need to invest in America's children and families. We do not need to create tax cuts that are more targeted.

The President has it right. The President has said to the American people: Let us not ruin a good thing; let us move forward.

There are many things with which we need to deal in this time of prosperity which we may never have another chance to consider. If we cannot at this moment in time reach out to the American society and help those who are struggling with day-to-day problems in their family and life, when will we ever do it?

If we cannot extend the protection of health insurance, as the President has proposed, to children and families across America at this moment in time, when will we do it? Those who are 55 years of age who, frankly, may face retirement and loss of health insurance need to have the option of buying into the Medicare plan.

Those who are already retired and the disabled who rely on Medicare need to have the protection of a prescription drug plan, a benefit which is common to almost every health insurance plan. The President has said we can do that, consistent with reducing the national debt and protecting Social Security as well as Medicare. There are certain